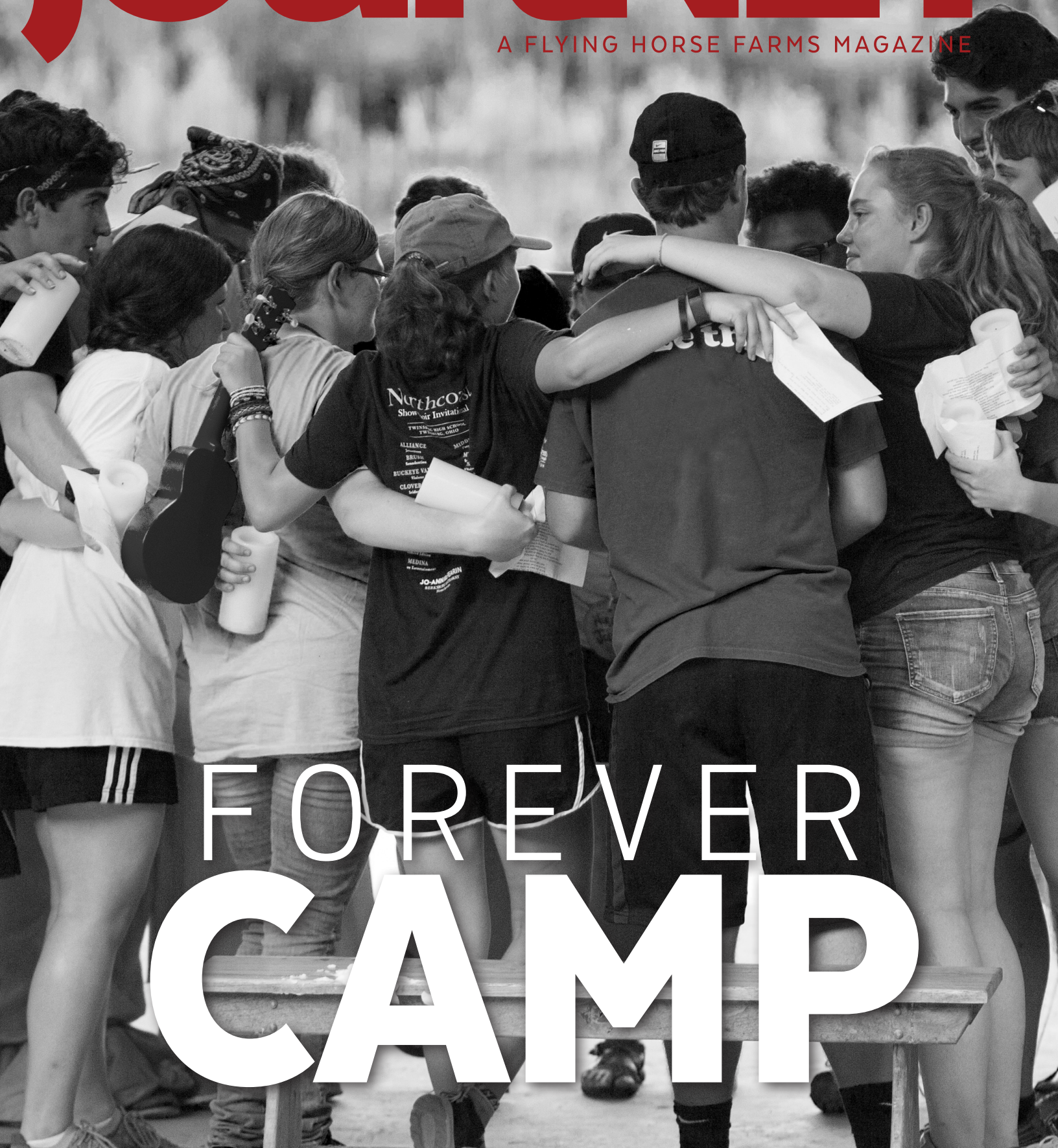


THE JOURNEY

A FLYING HORSE FARMS MAGAZINE



FOREVER
CAMP

Camp is Forever

I WAS HELPING THE TEAM coordinate camper departures at the end of my first summer session when a mother who had already begun pulling out with her son stopped her car.

“You’re the new person, right?” she asked.
“I am,” I said. “Did you forget something?”
She started to cry.

“This is a smile that we haven’t seen since he’s been diagnosed,” she said. “I never thought I would see it on my son’s face again.”

The next month, I asked one of our longtime campers how just six days of camp a year helps get her through the rest of it. “Camp,” she said, “is everything.” It gives her funny memories to recall on bad days and a text chain of friends who understand.

Those stories are just two of many that define camp. Think the child you knew is gone? Camp can bring him back. Rough day? Camp is but a memory away. Feeling alone? Camp, and that group of friends you bonded with, is with you.

The power of camp is in each of our campers now—nearly 6,000 since we



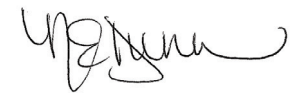
opened our gates. And those campers are carrying it and loving it and wielding it.

This summer, we celebrated camp’s 100th session. It’s a significant milestone. And it’s a milestone that has all of us reflecting on where we’ve been and where we want to go.

We want to continue filling souls with camp’s joy, inclusiveness and power. Because it’s about

a whole lot more than a weekend or a week. As you’ll read within these pages, camp’s impact is deep and wide for campers, for families, for staff, for volunteers and for donors.

As we like to say: Camp is the only place where whether you’re coming or going, you’re always headed home. And it is, indeed, forever. Thank you for making it possible.



Nichole E. Dunn
President/CEO, Flying Horse Farms

THE JOURNEY

A FLYING HORSE FARMS MAGAZINE

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Flying Horse Farms, located on 200 scenic acres in Mt. Gilead, Ohio, provides magical, transforming camp experiences for children with serious illnesses and their families—free of charge. It is the first camp in the Midwest to become a fully accredited member of the SeriousFun Children’s Network, a group of camps and programs worldwide founded by actor, philanthropist and Ohio native Paul Newman.

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Mission Support

Community partners have sold goodies galore to benefit Flying Horse Farms. Here are a handful of highlights.



● PACKING A PUNCH
All summer long, the thoughtful team at Native Cold Pressed donated \$1 of each Pitaya Punch sold to Flying Horse Farms.



● TASTES LIKE SUMMER
Rime Time Curiously Crafted Pops—which makes unique, imaginative ice pops—visited camp once per summer session to deliver their hand-made goodness. So every time you buy a pop, you’re helping deliver a tasty treat to our campers, too.



● STYLE WITH SOUL
Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister Co. and abercrombie kids invited shoppers to round up for SeriousFun Children’s Network camps all summer. Donations benefited The A&F Challenge, which supports SeriousFun camps, including Flying Horse Farms.



BUTTON-UP SHIRT PHOTO COURTESY/ABERCROMBIE & FITCH

● LIGHTING OUR (CAMP) FIRE
Kindred Beer developed Camp Fire beer specifically to benefit camp, and a portion of every beer sold—in stores, restaurants or bars—supports us.



● TREASURE TROVE
Furniture and home goods store Trove spent the holiday season giving back to camp. They gave free ornaments to guests who brought in items from camp’s wish list. And they donated a portion of holiday sales to camp.



● CHEERS
During Columbus Craft Beer Week, the pie-slinging gurus at Paulie Gee’s donated a portion of every pizza sold to Flying Horse Farms.



● SO FRESH & SO CLEAN
Grooming company Cliff Original teamed with Native Cold Pressed to create Tend—a hydrating soap rich in vitamin A, beta carotene and antioxidants—and donated \$5 from every bar sold to camp.



CAMP KITCHEN INSIDER

The Medicine of Food

MANY KIDS SAY THE FOOD IS THEIR FAVORITE PART OF CAMP. BUT IT’S ABOUT A WHOLE LOT MORE than tasty eats.

“To us, food is medicine. Food is fuel. And food is a way for me to show my love for our campers and our mission,” says Flying Horse Farms Food Services Director Wes Patterson. “I love that I have been given the opportunity to lead this program.”

In the heart of summer camp, Patterson and his team prepare about 600 meals a day—many of them for campers with intense dietary restrictions. And there’s more to consider beyond food prep. Camp is constantly working to reduce costs, which means Patterson and his team get creative, utilizing donations that include items from organic chickens to foodbank produce.

Patterson relishes the challenge: “It builds an environment that forces creativity.”

Flying Horse Farms Medical Director Dr. Barb Galantowicz runs the mind-body-spirit team, which oversees food services. Here, we go inside the kitchen with her to explore what makes our food—and the crew behind it—so special.

Q: Many campers say the food is their favorite part of Flying Horse Farms. What types of food does camp serve?

A: We try to have foods that are real and cooked from scratch, so they’re not processed. And I think it’s important, because I think we should set a precedent. Food is medicine. And I feel we should set an example by serving food that’s good for you.

Q: Many campers have dietary restrictions. What all must your team consider during meal planning?

A: We identify all of the food restrictions during the application process, and there are different types we must consider. There are allergies, which can be life-threatening. There are intolerances, which are less severe than allergies but can cause digestive problems. And then there are food choices, which range from vegetarian to religious restrictions.

Q: From a food services standpoint, the most challenging week is when camp hosts children with gastrointestinal diagnoses. How many different diets did you accommodate this year during that week?

A: Fifty-six of those 60 campers had different diets. And there was more for the food services team to accommodate once they accounted for staff and volunteers.

Q: It must be challenging for parents who know how tricky their children’s dietary restrictions are to relinquish control to camp’s staff.

A: It is, and we acknowledge that. Wes typically calls five to 10 sets of parents—those whose children have the most challenging diets—before each camp session. His most important job is ensuring the parents that our team is prepared to safely and effectively nourish their children. He does an excellent job easing parents’ minds.

Q: Your team goes so far as to make multiple versions of s’mores so as many campers as possible can enjoy the tradition. How many different s’mores do you make?

A: Nine! Some can’t have soy. Some can’t have dairy. Some can’t have gluten. Some can’t have gluten or dairy. And so on. Like with everything else at camp, we adapt so that unlike in the outer world, nobody at camp feels left out here.

Q: Chef Wes creatively incorporates generous donations from local farms, Mid-Ohio Foodbank and more each camp session. What types of foods are donated to camp, and how are those incorporated?

A: First, we are incredibly grateful for these donations, because they save camp money while allowing us to serve fresh, healthy, local foods. We have a church who donates a cow each year, and Wes strategizes how he wants it cut to provide different types of meat. A former camper family donates chickens that they raise on their farm. Two different Columbus bakeries donate baked goods for our gluten-free campers. Rime Time donates popsicles so healthy that one of our campers was able to try a popsicle for the very first time. And Mid-Ohio Foodbank allows Wes to go every Wednesday for a half hour. He gets a cart and can choose from what’s available, so it’s like a mad dash. It could be avocados one week and cherries the next. It could be yogurt that must be eaten within three days. So he adapts the menu based on what he’s able to get from all of these generous donors—while of course accommodating all of our diets and making it delicious. What Wes and his team are able to do is amazing.

Q: Ohio State sends dietetics students to intern in camp’s kitchen every summer. How has this upped the ante for camp’s food services?

A: This partnership is wonderful. Each year, they send two sets of interns, and each set stays for three weeks. They learn how to work in a kitchen safely and hygienically

while sharing their dietary knowledge—what is in certain packages, what snacks can these kids have or not have. So we get this steady stream of educated experts who work with Wes and each week’s rotating volunteers.

Q: Camp has transitioned its food services under the direction of you and your medical team. Why?

A: We are the mind-body-spirit team—medical, child life, food services. And we really believe in that concept. Healing happens when all of these elements are working together.

Q: How much food is camp currently growing in its garden, and what is the ultimate garden goal?

A: Right now, we’re growing seasonal basics—basil and tomatoes. We’ve also grown strawberries. And we actually just got two pear trees and two apple trees that we’re hoping will bear fruit for family camps this fall. We also have herbs—peppermint, oregano and more. Ultimately, we really would like to have a program that helps us use our garden as a more substantive resource. Originally, the garden was built by a Leadership Columbus group, which was great. But we just don’t have enough volunteers to fully utilize it. We would love to do some programming too, to teach kids about gardening. It’s on our wish list for sure.

Q: Camp has only one full-time food services director but serves roughly 600 meals each full day of camp to campers, staff and volunteers in the summer. How do you pull that off day in and day out?

A: It takes about 10 people each day who we call our K-Crew, which stands for Kitchen Crew. They are the interns and volunteers who support Wes every day of camp. And they are supported by volunteer work groups who come in before each camp session to prep by doing things like cutting veggies and fruit. Wes and the K-Crew team take care of the front of the house, too. It’s like running a full-blown restaurant.

Q: Many of the K-Crew volunteers return year after year. Why do they love it?

A: It’s such an important part of camp, because if campers’ bodies are not well fed, then the kids are not functioning the way they should be functioning. So it’s rewarding. It’s also a fun way to be part of camp while spending time with family or friends. Some people make it a family affair, or they volunteer with friends. For heart camp, we have two couples who join the K-Crew every year because they want to see each other, and they feel it’s great time spent together while also giving back.

CAMP RECIPE



BANANA BOAT S'MORE

Ingredients

- 1 Banana
- Allergen-free chocolate chips
- Mini Marshmallows
- Enjoy Life allergen-free cookie, crumbled

Instructions

- 1 Take the banana with the peel intact. Cut the banana length-wise, but not the entire way through.
- 2 Open the banana where you have made the cut, then add chocolate chips, marshmallows & cookie crumbles directly into the center.
- 3 Press the banana back together, wrap in foil & place near some warm coals in the fire for roughly 10 minutes.
- 4 Unwrap, peel & enjoy!



► Dinos serving dinner? Yes, please! Camp Medical Director Barb Galantowicz, at left, and Food Services Director Wes Patterson, bottom right, believe that food is medicine—and that it should be fun, too.





RANGER REVELATION

We spent one week with a group of Flying Horse Farms Rangers—bunking with them, laughing with them, crying with them, growing with them. The intent was to share their story. The result was an indescribable soul lift—a feeling impossible to fully articulate. This is the Ranger experience.

THE RANGERS ARE SITTING IN A SINGLE ROW AT camp's serene amphitheater, their arms wrapped around each other's shoulders.

It's quiet down here on the waterfront, tucked deep inside a camp that is tucked deep inside rural America. And the Rangers are quiet, too—listening.

Steph, one of their counselors, is reading a note of advice written by a former Ranger.

"Stop and take a moment," she reads aloud. "Look around at all the faces laughing. Hear beyond the noise. Stand back and take in that feeling. Close your eyes if you need to..."

It's Day 3 of camp, and this crew of 11 is preparing to climb the Ranger Wall, a 10-foot pallet with no grips, hooks or holds—just the word "RANGERS" painted on the front. To scale it and beat the standing record, they'll have to rely only on each other—and that's the point. The wall is widely considered to be the hallmark of the Ranger experience.

The Flying Horse Farms Rangers are campers on the cusp of, well, everything, really—at camp and in life. They are, for the most part, longtime campers who have evolved into teens ready for a new challenge. And the Ranger program offers it in the form of one week at camp as servant leaders. They straddle the worlds between camper and adulthood—still enjoying

many favorite camp traditions while also giving back (kitchen clean-up, anyone?) and teambuilding.

It is a coveted experience—one granted to only about three dozen kids a summer. But it's also a scary one, even for seasoned campers. The Rangers have long camped with the same kids, divided into weeks by diagnosis—heart disease, cancer, arthritis, siblings and more. Until now. While this week's current campers, for example, have cancer and other blood disorders, the Rangers have a mix of diagnoses. And most just met for the first time this week.

Three days ago, this unit of six boys and five girls, all somewhere between 16 and 17, wasn't much of a unit at all. They sat together in a circle on the front porch of a cabin affectionately called the Rounge (the Ranger-Lounge) and rattled off their names. They made jokes and laughed at awkward silences and asked questions about the week ahead.

They knew the week would be Dining Hall dance parties and Color Olympics. But they didn't know it would bring shared laughter and tears, a few hard questions and a few even harder answers, a lot of group hugs and a bunch of "I love you's." They didn't know that soon, they'd never want to leave.

Right now, however, nobody is thinking about yesterday or tomorrow. They're thinking about the wall.

And not one of them looks nervous. They look ready.

"Find your way out of the maze," Danielle, one of the Ranger Leaders, says. "Raise your hand if you need help."

She repeats the phrase over and over as the Rangers, blindfolded, feel their way around. It's Day 1 of camp, and their task is simple: Find their way out of the maze. Raise a hand if they need help.

The maze is small, made of rope wrapped around posts and trees just outside of the cabins. The Rangers were told to keep one hand on the rope to feel their way out. But the maze is essentially a circle with a line down the middle—it has no exit.

"If you need help" are the words Danielle wants them to notice. Because they will need help to get out, and the sooner they realize it, the sooner others might, too.

Travis is the first to raise his hand. Danielle guides him out, takes his blindfold off and quietly lets him in on the secret. He grins knowingly, and she tasks him with helping the others when they're ready.

Once all the Rangers have admitted defeat, they gather in the Rounge to debrief. Debriefing is an integral part of the Ranger experience. Because of its design as a servant leadership program for young adults, Ranger activities almost always have a deeper meaning, and the conversations afterward help to drive that meaning home.

Eitan (pronounced A-tawn), their other Ranger Leader, asks them what they thought about the maze.

"I knew it all along!" a few shout. Those who raised a hand early on make jokes about the more determined group.

Eitan brings them back.

"How can you connect this to your life?" he asks.

It's quiet for a moment. Most aren't ready to get personal—they're still warming up to each other, to camp.

Abby takes the first step, sharing how she struggles with her AP classes and admits resisting the idea of help.

"I want to try doing it all on my own," she says, "but I know it may not go the way I planned."

Danielle is encouraging, driving home that help, if we're willing to take it, is always just a question away.

"If we don't ask for help," she says, "we can't get it."

As the sun begins to set behind the Big Red Barn, the Rangers prepare for Night Zip, strapping on helmets and harnesses so they can fly across the water on a zip line.

Each Ranger is given a rock and a marker.

"Write down something you want to let go of," Andre, their nurse, tells them. "When you're over the lake, let it go."

Some write down physical or mental health struggles; others simply doodle. It's still Day 1. Walls are apparent everywhere.

Just one Ranger—Seth—is opting out of Night Zip. Heights make him nervous—they are, in camp terms, his panic zone—so he heads to the Landing Zone to cheer on his friends as they complete their zips.

One by one, the Rangers glide down the line, their rocks plopping loudly in the water. They land, with smiles, to the whoops and shouts of their counselors and fellow campers.

Back in the Rounge, it's time for reflection.

Abby had scribbled PTSD on her rock. When she was just 8, her younger brother was diagnosed with acute lympho-





TO ME, CAMP MEANS...

A safe haven.

—Daniel, 16, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Sugarcreek who lives with arthritis



I'm loved, safe, wanted, welcome. It's my home and family, and I wouldn't change a thing.

—Skylar, 16, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Norton who lives with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, arthritis and irritable bowel syndrome



Freedom.

—Brack, 16, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Dayton who lives with leukemia



Dropping the walls that you build up and just being who you are—and letting others see and appreciate you for you.

—Anthony Andrews, 22, Flying Horse Farms volunteer Ranger counselor



Everything.

—Travis, 16, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Medina who lives with asthma



blastic leukemia. She'd spend hours in the hospital with him, staying until she was asked to leave. She remembers the sounds of the hospital, the sight of doctors running down the hall. It left a mark. And a few years later, after her brother recovered, she was diagnosed with PTSD. Abby's a realist when it comes to the benefits of letting that rock go.

"I mean, you can't really let it go," she says. "But it felt good in the moment."

The others agree. But Brandon, a Ranger counselor, encourages them to keep trying.

"When you threw that rock, it created ripples in the water," he says. "And when you let go of hard things, it creates positive ripples in your life, too."

These Rangers know hard things—not only related to their serious illness or the illness of a sibling, but also to the challenges that come with being a teenager.

Evan has tetralogy of fallot, a condition that affects normal blood flow through the heart, as well as spina bifida, a birth defect affecting the spinal column. Both make it challenging for him to walk, let alone play the sports he loves. Skylar has Ehlers-Danos syndrome, a connective tissue disorder, and she recently broke her foot as a result. Travis, who's long dealt with the effects of moderate persistent asthma, lost a close friend to an overdose. Heather struggles with anxiety after watching her younger sister battle cancer.

They all know difficulty, but at the beginning of Day 2, they don't know how much it will bring them together.

That becomes clear at the Trust Circle, one of the most intimate moments of Ranger Camp. Eitan and Danielle have placed a wide ring of candles in the Rounge, and the Rangers and their counselors form a standing circle just inside the dim lights.

Eitan begins reading a list of statements, which start fairly general. If it applies to you, you step forward, then return to your place.

"I have hobbies I enjoy."

Everyone steps forward.

"I want to care for others."

Everyone steps forward.

"I am living with a serious illness."

Most step forward.

Slowly, the questions become more revealing and, often, it says more if you don't step forward than if you do.

"I've been bullied or teased."

Most step forward.

"I feel I have the support I need to handle my challenges."

Most step forward.

As the questions come to a close, Eitan invites them to sit and reflect. The room is heavy. A few Rangers wipe away tears. He offers them the chance to share more if they'd like.

And one by one, they do. Their vulnerability is contagious.

Brack, who's been quiet until now, talks about his experience battling Burkitt's lymphoma at age 12 and managing the complications of his two other diagnoses, including Evans syndrome, an autoimmune disorder. He worries about his younger brother, who has the same disorder, and will turn 12 soon.

Then, an admission.

"I've said more to you guys in the past 10 minutes than



I have to anyone else in the past 10 years,” he says.

Everyone laughs, nodding in agreement. They come in for a group hug.

Outside, a campfire, complete with s’mores and banana boats, is waiting for them. They gather around, laughing and singing and posing for photos. They seem lighter, almost relieved.

“Well,” they say, more than once, “now that we’ve all cried in front of each other, we’re family.”

They resist going back to their cabins.

“The week goes by quick,” Steph reads aloud. “But these feelings you have at camp, you need to hold on to forever.”

When she finishes reading, the Rangers unlock arms, stand up and start to strategize their ascent of the Ranger Wall.

There are ground rules, of course. Anyone can help boost the others up until they’ve made it over the wall themselves. After that, they can descend and help spot, but they can no longer boost.

They nominate Timmy and Brack, the two tallest, to climb up first and stand on the platform that sits on the back of the wall. They’ll assist others over. Eitan will stand on the platform, too, to make sure they’re following the rules, which require each person to check in with their spotters and with Eitan before making an attempt.

“Spotters ready?” Abby asks.

“Ready,” they respond.

“Can I try?” she asks.

“Try away,” Eitan responds.

And she’s up and over. Followed by Daniel, Anna, Heather, Skylar and Hayley.

Seth—the lone Ranger who opted out of Night Zip because of his fear of heights—is next. Swiftly and smoothly, Brack and Timmy grab his arms and help lift him 10 feet up and then over the edge. Seth plants his feet firmly on the platform, pauses and looks down.

“I haven’t been up this high in a while,” he says.

The group bursts into cheers.

“You,” he says, “made me feel safe.”

Evan climbs up next, leaving Travis last and without anyone to boost him. He jumps up, hands extended skyward, and his friends grab firmly, quickly helping him to the other side.

They all climb down and await their results.

Alexa, camp’s Program Coordinator, tells them they received a one-minute safety penalty (for clapping when they should’ve been spotting).

Their final time is three seconds quicker than the group that held the title.

“You,” she says, “have beat the Ranger record.”

Celebration ensues. They clap and jump and hug, and then make their way to the back of the wall, where they sign their names alongside the Rangers who came before them.

The rest of camp is a blur—a race against time.

By week’s end, debriefing activities is much different. They’re more eager to talk and reflect. Plenty of jokes are made, but there are

no awkward silences. It’s not unlike a rowdy family gathering, where everyone seems to have something to say and there’s a shared feeling of closeness—the kind that exists only when you’ve been through something together and have come out stronger on the other side.

Eitan asks them about the Ranger Wall, why they felt they beat the record.

Daniel puts it simply: They had consensus. He doubles-down on the familial spirit of the group.

“This feels more like a family than camp has before,” he says. “We’re connected.”

That’s clearest at closing campfire, as they sing the Mountain Song for the last time.

We come from the mountains, living in the mountains

Go back to the mountains, and turn the world around.

Most are teary-eyed, holding onto each other and promising to keep in touch.

Tomorrow, they’ll go back to their mountains. Back to their teenage bedrooms. Back to their teenage challenges. But now, they’ll do it with a whole new text chain—and the wisdom that they are not journeying alone.

Perhaps when it gets dark—and it will get dark—they can return to that single row in camp’s serene amphitheater, on the edge of the quiet water, with friends’ arms wrapped snugly around their shoulders. Listening to Steph read the final sentence before they conquered the Ranger Wall.

“You might leave camp,” she says. “But camp never leaves you.”





FOREVER CAMP

This year, Flying Horse Farms celebrated its 100th camp session. Here, we share a series of favorite reflections from campers, counselors, doctors and others on the power of camp.





CONFIDENCE BOOST

This past week has changed my life for the better. I usually like to keep this stuff under wraps, but this family I've made at Flying Horse Farms deserves recognition. Being able to work for camp has helped me take a big step in life and grow up more than I already have. Being able to be myself and go crazy has boosted my self-confidence extremely. This camp truly does magical things. I love you all. You're all my family.
—Travis, 16, a Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Medina, Ohio who lives with asthma



JUMP RIGHT IN

These kids teach me more about life than any adult out there. Be excited. Be brave. Jump right in. Thanks for another amazing week, Flying Horse Farms. —Stef Streb, Flying Horse Farms volunteer camp counselor from Columbus, Ohio



A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Caring for children with cancer can wear on doctors, too. Relapses. Infections. Complications. We don't get to spend a lot of time with kids when they're doing well.

Fever. Puke. Diarrhea. These companions torment our patients all too frequently when they come to visit us in the hospital. Working day in and day out among our "failures" (many of which we have no control over), one can begin to think that the work we do doesn't make much difference.

Then you come to camp. Then you say to yourself, "Ah, so THIS is what my patients look like when they're NOT in the hospital!" And it feels good!

Singing. Paddling. Fishing. Swimming. Eating s'mores around a campfire. Climbing ropes. Zipping alone over a beautiful pond at sunset.

These memories stick with you. You come away seeing your patients not as unfortunate children challenged by illness, but as, well, just kids. And you remember why you chose this job in the first place. —Dr. Ryan Roberts, physician for the Division of Hematology and Oncology at Nationwide Children's Hospital and Flying Horse Farms volunteer doctor



PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF

I used to wonder why nobody else at the pool had a scar like me. I wondered if I would ever find someone else who did.

I thought I had limits. Everyone told me I did. So I believed them.

Then, eight years ago, I walked through the hole in the Big Red Barn, leaving all my worries behind. I had no idea how this one place, this red barn and all of its smiles, would change the rest of my life.

The teachers at school asked my mom what happened to the shy 7-year-old who never raised her hand and never stepped out of her comfort zone.

"Camp."

That one simple word.

Just one place where anyone can be themselves. Laugh and cry and dance and sing and jump and be as silly as they want. Where even when you have a scar on your chest and have to take a handful of medication, you can be a kid.

I will never forget the first time I stood on stage by myself and belted out the words to Selena Gomez or the first time I sang Birds in the Wilderness. But most of all, I will never forget the first time I knew what home truly felt like. With my family of people who all have matching scars and equally enormous hearts.

I had no idea that I would find myself hidden in the songs danced to in the dining hall, in the smiles shared between the crackling of a fire and in the shouts of joy when kids who were told they couldn't do anything triumph over the beeping of heart monitors and the slow drips of IVs.

The meaning of camp cannot be explained by simple words. It is a feeling bubbly and warm telling you that you can fly.

That is why it is called Flying Horse Farms. There are no horses, and it is not really a farm. But when you are there, you learn that anything is possible—that everything is possible. —Marin, 15, a Flying Horse Farms camper from Columbus, Ohio who lives with congenital heart disease. Empowered by her experiences at camp, Marin gained confidence and began playing sports under her doctor's supervision. She now competes as a goalie in field hockey and lacrosse.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, MY FRIENDS



Camp and the people at camp have always held a special place in my heart.

You can always count on camp to be your place of peace and serenity. Walking through the arch, all of your troubles, burdens and sadness just fade into the air as if they never existed to begin with.

Camp has almost this feeling of warmth and safety. You feel safe to let out the real side of yourself that nobody actually gets to see. You feel that your condition and the amount of medications that you take do not define who you are or what you are like as a person.

At camp, you don't have a label. You have

the freedom to be who you are and be as silly as you can without being labeled as an outcast. It doesn't matter what you look like, who you are, your background—you fit in and have a feeling of comfort. You're one with yourself.

Leaving camp is absolutely heartbreaking. Sitting altogether one

last time, knowing that this may be the last time you are all together as a group is saddening. You watched everybody grow as a group from the beginning to the end of the week. You give your friends hugs thinking you may or may not ever give them another hug again. You pray that they can feel your hug during their

dark times and during the times where they wish they could be next to you laughing until you are all crying. You wish you could be there when they accomplish something to let them know you're proud of them.

As you walk away from your friends and your cabin and counselors, you see the cabin in the

distance, and all the memories come rushing back in a flood of unstoppable tears. You whisper to yourself as you pull out of camp, "Until next time, my friends," and you wave goodbye.

You can leave camp, but camp never leaves you. —Zoe, 16, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Elyria, Ohio





SACRED GROUND

Lucas was always our adventurer, explorer, tree climber, creek jumper, risk taker, do-it-all kid.

Each day of summer, after spending countless hours exploring the meadows and forests around our farm, he would excitedly come to the house to show off his latest discoveries—rocks, sticks, frogs, turtles and bones that he was convinced must have come from dinosaurs. This was Lucas.

But when he was 8, our world turned upside down.

We traded walks in the woods for walks down hospital corridors. We traded identifying birds by their calls to trying to identify what was making him so ill. Collections of rocks on the counter were replaced by collections of pill bottles.

Lucas has three siblings who have walked this journey alongside him, often having to put their needs and wants aside because of the demands of this illness. In summer of 2011, two of our children were asked to attend church camps. As former campers, my husband and I know how empowering camp can be. Being away from home, developing confidence, experiencing new things and meeting new friends is what we associate with our camp experience and wanted so desperately for our own children. But here is what I remember from that summer: crying. Crying because although I desperately wanted my children to experience camp, how could I send some and not our one truest explorer?

My husband and I decided that we would do whatever it took to get all of our kids to camp the next summer. I got on the phone and called each director. I explained Lucas' situation—how he can't really eat, and yes he takes a bunch of medication, and sure, he has an EpiPen, and sometimes, his joints hurt so badly he has to Army crawl rather than walk. But he really is not that sick, I promised. I begged. My pleas were rejected.

It took another year, but we eventually found Flying Horse Farms. And an amazing, life-changing relationship began. A relationship that not only provided exciting adventures and experiences and friendships and cherished memories for our children, but respite and hope for our whole family. We found our home.

Flying Horse Farms has provided a safe place for

my kids to grow and search and find the most authentic version of themselves. It has helped my kids find a confidence to try new things. It has helped them express themselves—their silliness, their hopes and their fears. It has provided opportunities for my kids to live, for at least a week at a time, carefree—getting a much-needed respite from the “medicalness” that consumes our daily lives. It has given each of my kids a deep understanding of self and others and a strength that they reflect and rely on when they face adversity, whether it be medical or just the journey through their teenage years.

We often use the phrases “Flying Horse Brave” or “Ranger Strong” to help them visualize and work through adversities.

The importance of camp is astounding. Because of this, we had to make some rules:

- 1). Mom cannot wash the camp quilts that come home after a week of magic because “You will wash the FHF smell out.”
- 2). All FHF artwork is displayed as long as possible, even if paint is peeling and yarn is unraveling: “I need it for the memories,” they say.
- 3). All FHF name tags collected over various sessions will be displayed proudly on said campers' door-knobs—all tags, still to this day.

Camp has become an integral part of who we are. I can't capture it, but perhaps these words, from an essay Lucas wrote during his senior year, help:

I grew up going in and out of hospitals with many tests done on me for my serious illness. To say the least, I lost my childhood, and it affects the quality of my life to this day. However, I would not change those challenges at all. Looking back and into myself, I have found that my illnesses (Eosinophilic Esophagitis, Dysautonomia, Ehlers Danlos and Mast Cell Disorder) and the experiences that came along with them, ultimately made me who I am today. Because of these illnesses/diseases, I also had the opportunity to go to a summer camp that is my sacred ground, Flying Horse Farms.

Thank you to all who have made this journey possible. —Julie Blankenship, camper parent from Sullivan, Ohio, whose son, Lucas, became a summer camp counselor in 2018 after being a longtime camper



A SPIRITUAL LIFT



As a doctor, it's interesting to hear a parent's perspective on what they think their kids do versus what we see at camp. I really thought some of my patients were more physically limited, and yet they were doing a whole lot of stuff at camp. It has actually helped me discuss things

with parents afterward. And sometimes it's encouraging for parents to hear that their kids are doing better than I would have expected.

I recommend Flying Horse Farms to my patients because I want to make sure that they realize how important it is that they get out and

do things—that they don't just take it upon themselves to lay around and do nothing and feel sorry for themselves. Also, it's good they know, and their parents know, that they are not alone.

My wife, Sharon, and I have done a lot of things over the years: We've spent time in Africa, and

it is an interesting and worthwhile experience. But as we look back on what we've accomplished, even places far away, I don't think it's as much as what we've been able to accomplish here.

It's really given us kind of a spiritual lift. It gives me a break from

the hospital, too, and it kind of puts things in a little different perspective. And honestly, I really love the people. I think they're great. —Dr. Joseph Ross, Medical Director of Pediatric Cardiology at Dayton Children's Hospital and longtime Flying Horse Farms volunteer doctor



GOOD MEDICINE

It's crazy what just that ounce of camp spirit, or a quilt, or an old camp name tag hanging on your bedroom wall can get you through. I wish everyone in need had this to help them get by and learn about and love themselves! Camp IS good medicine.

—Courtney, 18, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Garden Prairie, Illinois



FEARLESS IS FREE

I literally carry camp with me through a bracelet I had made that says, “Fearless is free.” It reminds me to be brave like our campers, to be less afraid and to try new things. It reminds me to take a deep breath and move past my initial anxieties in a new situation. Camp has made me braver, more free and more fearless. —Anne Weidner, Flying Horse Farms summer staffer from Miamisburg, Ohio



HAIR DYE & HUMANITY

At the hospital, doctors generally talk to the kids, but it's about medicine. We ask about school, but not how school is—how school affects their heart disease.

Seeing my patients at camp doing the ropes course and swimming and being silly really changed how I look at the children, how I interact with them. I am silly with them when they're in the hospital now.

One of our longtime patients asked me to color my hair. I did—I colored it purple. Would I have done that in the past? Probably not. I think camp has put the child back into "children with congenital heart disease" for me. And in many ways, it has put the child back in me.

It's helped me with parents, too. Yes, I'm a doctor, but it's OK to show I do worry. I do grieve.

Camp has made me more human. —*Dr. Gerard Boyle, Medical Director of the Pediatric Transplant and Heart Failure Program at The Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital and longtime Flying Horse Farms volunteer doctor*



TEARS OF JOY



Thank you so much for having a place like this. My son went this year for the first time, and he came home a new kid! I haven't seen this amount of happiness in him since before his heart became sick.

It was eye-opening for him to have a place with

other kids that were just like him and where he was able to do a ton of fun things other than video games! My heart was so full picking him up when I asked him, "How was camp?" and he said it was going to be the full four-hour drive home to tell me

everything. Tears of joy!

Thank you to every volunteer, counselor, nurse, doctor and donor of funds who make this beautiful place possible. You are beautiful souls! —*Jessica Jones, camper parent from Franklin, Indiana*

MISSING HOME



Thank you for being the light in my life every summer. From my first walk past the Big Red Barn to my last, you have made my life so much better. Thanks to you, I found myself in the silly songs, crazy dances

and memorable walks through the camp. Thank you for giving me the best friends I could have ever asked for. Thank you for showing me I can change the world for the better. I can't wait to be a Ranger next year, and I

absolutely can't wait for the day I return to camp as a counselor. I promise to take everything you guys have taught me with me throughout life. —*Alex, 15, Flying Horse Farms camper from Burton, Ohio*



SPECIAL DELIVERY

Oh. My. Goodness. I am speechless! Tonight I opened up a surprise box of happiness from some of my favorite people on the planet: My Flying Horse Farms Rangers!

I've had a very trying few months, especially the last few weeks, and this box was just what I needed. It has the most beautiful blanket made from various camp T-shirts (which I'm currently covered with), so many socks, candy, sloth things, and more. I can't get over how amazing this is! I just can't stop smiling!

These people—Aleah, T, Mayah, Awo, Laura, Ethan, Todd and David—are some of the strongest, most courageous and most loving people I've ever met. They care so deeply and all truly embody every aspect of camp. They never fail to find ways to make me smile and encourage me, both at camp and from afar.

Though I haven't seen them in person since we spent one glorious week together at Flying Horse Farms, we talk every day and have grown even closer than I ever would have thought. I don't know how I could have gotten through the last few months without them.

Thank you, Flying Horse Farms, for giving me this group of incredible souls.

Thank you for giving me a group of the truest friends, who love without limits, celebrate each and every victory (no matter how small), cheer on each other, cry with each other, laugh until their bellies hurt, sing the best camp songs and dance like nobody's watching.

You've given me some of my best friends, and I am forever grateful and indebted to you.

Camp has changed me. These people have changed me. And it's the greatest thing ever!

Flying Horse Farms, you rock! One of the best things that ever happened to me, and probably one of the best that ever will.

Camp is my favorite place on the planet. Camp is home. —*Elizabeth, 18, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Grosse Pointe, Michigan who lives with multiple autoimmune diseases*



HEAVEN ON EARTH

The dream of my son Austin going to camp actually started 12 years ago in the surgery waiting room at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh when he was 3 months old.

Despite a seemingly healthy pregnancy, Austin was born with a rare and complicated medical condition, and his prognosis was poor. I wrote in a journal during this time: "Austin, I had such grand dreams for you. Maybe you'd be at the top of your class, athletic, artistic or musical. Now my dreams for you are very different, but just as grand. I dream that you can be like other kids - eat ice cream, swim in a pool, go to camp and have a sleep over. I dream that you can live your life without much pain, physical or emotional. But most of all, I just dream that you live."

Although Austin has indeed lived and exceeded everyone's expectations, his medical chart reads a bit like a logistical nightmare—IV fluid infusing 21+ hours a day, a central line, a G-tube, bleeding issues and emotional issues. Our hospital's transplant camp denied his camp application because he was simply too medically complex for them to manage.

Thankfully, Austin was able to become a camper at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp—the original SeriousFun camp. And now, because Flying Horse Farms is tackling incredibly medically and emotionally complex kids, Austin is a proud summer camper here. Because of camp, he is thriving on a social level in new and amazing ways.

What I couldn't have guessed in that hospital surgery waiting room 12 years ago is how much the rest of us would need camp, too.

In addition to Austin, 12, I also have a 9-year-old and 6-year-old twins. There have been significant secondary effects of having a medically ill child—divorce, financial strain and chronic stress that affects the whole family. My three younger children have literally grown up in exam rooms, the ER, infusion centers and the hospital. They see their brother screaming in pain, the ambulance taking

him away, us dashing to the ER, the vacation that ended early (again), the canceled plans.

I would like to think it doesn't affect them. I know I'm wrong. Chase asked me at age 5 if his brother would die. Alex asked me at 4 if he would get a "broken tummy" like his brother.

There are many programs and resources that thankfully provide support to the medically ill children, but there are few for the siblings.

Flying Horse Farms is a place that makes them feel special, too. Equal. Visible. Valued. A place where they have a name. Where people don't tell them to be quiet, sit still or be patient. A place where they get to raise a little hell, too. Because they deserve it. They've served their time—hundreds if not thousands of hours in the hospital, seeing things they shouldn't and worrying. I think of camp as make-up time for them.

Family camp is one of our family's favorite weekends of the year—right up there with Christmas. My kids come prepared with costumes, light-up fairy wings and hair dye.

As a single mom of a child with a complex medical condition, life can be overwhelming. Other parents tend to shy away from the uncomfortable realities of our life. It can be isolating. Flying Horse Farms is the only place I feel safe to let my guard down, relax, be real, connect with some other parents and just enjoy being with my kids. It's unconditional love and acceptance.

This year, I got to meet a mom whose child has a similar condition to mine and who shares similar life experiences. Two single moms swamped with the task of raising multiple children with special needs, burdened with nursing issues and financial issues, and tired of providers asking if we're taking care of ourselves. We giggled as if we'd known each other for years. I NEEDED that.

For circumstances like ours, there aren't quick fixes or maybe even fixes at all. But a weekend of seeing our kids' smiles and a little less stress is an amazing gift.

I look at each of the volunteers and staff while we're at camp and just wonder, Do they know? Do they know how much this impacts us all? How important this is to us? How amazing they are?

Camp has the ability to fill each one of us up with just what we need to go back into the world for another year. It's truly powerful medicine.

In addition to Austin having a complex medical condition, one of my 6-year-old twins also has a medical condition she's had difficulty coping with. It has resulted in her developing significant mental health issues and depression. She's seen therapists, psychologists, doctors and tried psychiatric medicine, but nothing has helped much. For a year straight, she's talked about wanting to live in heaven.

This spring, Flying Horse Farms did what none of the mental health professionals or medications could do. Saturday evening, just 24 hours into Family Camp, Leia whispered to me that today was the first time she felt happy and didn't want to go to heaven.

Sunday morning, she woke up smiling. "I don't want to go to heaven today either, Mommy," she said.

My heart soared. While the other children enjoyed the morning activities, Leia feverishly picked dandelions and blew them by the hundreds. I eventually asked her what she was wishing for. She told me she was wishing she could live at Flying Horse Farms forever.

As we left, I took a picture of the entrance to camp. It was a sad car ride back to Pittsburgh—after all, we can't live in the Big Red Barn. But when we arrived home, I showed Leia the photo and asked what she thought of it.

"I love it," she said. "It's the doorway to heaven!"

Indeed. She found heaven on Earth: Flying Horse Farms. —Jen Rath, camper parent from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



THE FREEDOM TO BE



I went into camp a shy kid who felt alone and misunderstood. Each year I broke out of my shell more and more. I made lasting friendships, not to mention the self-confidence it has helped me build.

It showed me the friendships I could make, the joy I can bring to others and the strength it takes to be who

you are.

Being a kid with medical issues, you don't get to live life as a normal kid. You're forced to grow up and deal with serious things, and that's no fun.

Camp gave me a chance to feel normal. It gave me friends who understand what it is like. And it gave me a second home. It lets

some people have the freedom to dance after every meal, or zip line, or even just live without worries for a few days. Not having to worry about medication, what others think or anything. Just having true, pure fun and enjoying your time with new and amazing people.

No matter what your walk of life is, no matter

what your story is, you are accepted and loved. They don't see what's wrong with you but what makes you amazing. What makes you you.

I definitely wouldn't be who I am today without the experience of camp.

—Alyssa, 17, Flying Horse Farms Ranger from Lucasville, Ohio

MEET

MICHELE ROTHSTEIN

Cleveland native Michele Rothstein is the Program Coordinator of Iris S. & Bert L. Wolstein's Kids Kicking Cancer at UH Rainbow Babies & Children's. She's also a passionate Flying Horse Farms volunteer and advocate who recruits campers, raises money, sits on camp's Northeast Ohio advisory committee and brings a bus load of campers to camp for one week every summer.

Q: Why do you give your time to Flying Horse Farms?

A: Flying Horse Farms is a special place where campers get to be themselves, challenge themselves, make friends, have fun, smile, laugh, sing songs and be kids.

Q: How does camp make you feel?

A: Camp is my happy place. I love everything about camp: the friendships, the smiles, the songs, the challenges and the successes.

Q: How have you witnessed camp change others?

A: My first summer at camp, one of the girls in our cabin was petrified of dogs. She wanted nothing to do with them. But through the canine program, she learned to love them. She left camp completely comfortable around the dogs.

Q: How has camp changed you?

A: Camp has changed me for the better. Our campers show me the true meaning of friendship as they help each other out and rally behind someone who needs extra help.

Q: What one moment you've experienced at camp best captures camp's essence?

A: This summer, one of our campers was not feeling well on our last full day of camp. She had spent time in the WellNest, and we weren't sure if she would be able to join us for closing campfire. Because of the medical staff, she was able to attend closing campfire and even participate

in our cabin's skit. Camp makes the sometimes impossible possible.

Q: Favorite time of day at camp?

A: That's a tough question. I love the morning because it's the start of another day of fun, but I also enjoy cabin chat and listening to the wonderful stories and accomplishments of the day.

Q: Favorite camp activity?

A: There's too many to choose from! When I helped out in arts and crafts, I loved seeing the creativity in each camper. Now that I specialize in archery, it has been awesome to watch first-time archers learn about how to shoot archery and get better with each arrow. The joy they experience when they hit a bullseye or get their first card is a huge highlight. It's so fun to watch them do the bullseye or card dance with so much pride.

Q: Song that always takes you back to camp?

A: I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)

Q: What has camp taught you?

A: Collectively, my camp experiences remind me of the truth in Karen Ravn's quote: Only as high as I reach can I grow. Only as far as I seek can I go. Only as deep as I look can I see. Only as much as I dream can I be." Camp provides everyone the opportunity to be their best!

Q: What is camp to you?

A: Home.

← CAMP
HERO

► Longtime volunteer Michele Rothstein, sitting center stage, is doused by a camper during a show



HOW TO HELP

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An easy way to double your gift? Ask your employer if they have a charitable gift-matching program.

For details, email us at giving@flyinghorsefarms.org.

GIFTS OF STOCK

Gifts of stock are an efficient way to donate to Flying Horse Farms. Upon transfer, the stock is sold and the proceeds are made available to Flying Horse Farms.

For details, email us at giving@flyinghorsefarms.org.

GIFTS IN KIND

Gifts in kind are products and services that help meet the needs of campers, staff and our facility.

For details, email us at giving@flyinghorsefarms.org.

THIRD PARTY EVENTS

Gather friends and colleagues to raise funds for and awareness about Flying Horse Farms.

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VOLUNTEER

PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Family Sidekicks — Ages 19 & up. Partner with a family for a weekend family camp. Sidekicks help campers feel welcome and supported while exploring group and individual activities. These volunteers are hosts who focus on creating a wonderful weekend for the entire family.

Cabin Counselors — Ages 19 & up. Volunteer during a weeklong, kids-only summer camp. Counselors participate in activities, eat with their campers and provide support and supervision. They are energetic, positive, patient and ready to make magic happen.

Activity Counselors — Ages 19 & up. Volunteer as the leader of a specific activity for an entire weekend family camp or weeklong summer camp. Areas include waterfront, nature and discovery, Angie's Arts & Crafts, archery and spotlight.

Dining Hall Volunteers — Ages 18 & up or 16 & up with a guardian. Join us for a weekend or week to help prepare and serve meals to keep camper bellies full and happy. These volunteers are a vital part of the camp experience.

Lifeguards — Ages 16 & up; must be certified. Ensure that our campers are safe while swimming, boating and fishing. Certified lifeguards are needed throughout the year when waterfront activities are open. Scheduling is flexible.

Interested? Email us at volunteer@flyinghorsefarms.org. We will send you a link to an application when they go live in November.

MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

Provide medical care and support during weekend family camp or weeklong summer camp. We need: physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists and pharmacists (for camper arrival). Medical volunteers serve under the scope of their professional practice.

Interested? Email us at volunteer@flyinghorsefarms.org.

CAMP CREATORS


With a full-time facilities team of two, camp relies on corporations, organizations and individuals to help make camp pristine by making beds, cleaning cabins, helping with yard work and otherwise prepping for the next set of campers.

Interested? Email us at volunteer@flyinghorsefarms.org.

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Help spread the word about camp by volunteering to staff an event. These volunteers help coordinate event-day details and assure everything runs smoothly.

Interested? Email us at events@flyinghorsefarms.org.

A scenic photograph of a sunset over a body of water. In the foreground, a gravel path leads towards a blue barn with white double doors. The barn has a sign that says "BOA HOUSE" with an anchor icon. The water reflects the vibrant orange and yellow colors of the sunset sky. Bare trees line the far shore, and the sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

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AN IDEAL
WORLD.

—JADEY GILMORE,
FLYING HORSE FARMS VOLUNTEER CAMP COUNSELOR



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"THANKS TO YOU, I FOUND MYSELF."
—ALEX, FLYING HORSE FARMS CAMPER